



*Office of the United States Attorney  
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **BORDER OFFICIAL CHARGED WITH COCAINE OFFENSE**

TUCSON, Ariz.— Fernando Arango, 51, of Rio Rico, Ariz. was arrested and charged with attempting to possess with intent to distribute cocaine. Arango was arrested on Sunday, October 2, 2005 and appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Hector C. Estrada this afternoon. Arango is in federal custody until his scheduled detention hearing before Judge Estrada on October 5, 2005 at 10:30 a.m.

U.S. Attorney Paul K. Charlton stated that "The arrest of this individual tarnishes the respected collective image of thousands of hard working federal agents working our border and throughout Arizona. It is inconceivable that this officer would have facilitated this operation to such a degree."

"CBP does not tolerate corruption on the part of its personnel. Although the vast majority of CBP frontline officers are law enforcement professionals of the highest integrity, the few that are not will face very serious consequences, including criminal prosecution," said Robert C. Bonner, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner.

The criminal complaint alleges that Arango, an officer with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Nogales, Ariz. used his official position in an attempt to bring 200 kilograms of cocaine into the United States from Mexico. On October 1, 2005, Arango was working at the Mariposa Port of Entry and took affirmative action to ensure that a Recreational Vehicle (RV) passed through the checkpoint without being searched. On October 2, 2005, Arango was paid \$50,000 in U.S. currency for passing the RV through the Port of Entry on October 1, which he believed contained 200 kilograms of cocaine.

A conviction for attempting to possess with intent to distribute five kilos or more of cocaine carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, a \$4 million fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, the assigned judge will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

A criminal complaint is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the complaint was conducted by the FBI and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Office of Professional Responsibility. The prosecution is being handled by James T. Lacey, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

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